

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am testifying in favor of HB-6355, An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders.

No family in our State is free from the impact of mental health crises. I have seen, firsthand, the toll that depression and other mental health issues can take on a loved one. Strengthening our Extreme Risk Protection Order law will not only protect the individuals suffering a mental health crisis, but will protect their families and the public from potential harm.

I am proud to be a resident of the Connecticut. The fact that we were the first state to enact an ERPO law is a testament to the commitment of our lawmakers to common sense gun legislation. The changes proposed to the law will strengthen and modernize the existing law.

Because there are often warning signs preceding violent or suicidal behavior this last-resort temporary removal measure with due process protections is an effective tool for reducing gun violence. Because firearm suicide accounts for up to two-thirds of gun deaths and is the second leading cause of suicide in Connecticut, there is an urgent need to strengthen our ERPO law to help it save more lives.

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gregory Weaver
West Hartford, CT